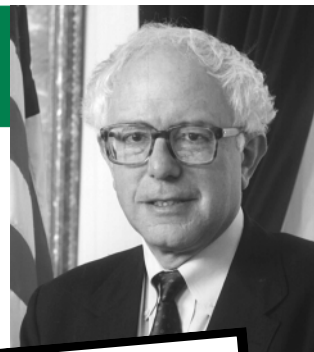




U.S. Representative

**Bernie Sanders**

*A Special Focus on Energy Issues*



Winter 2001/02

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives – Washington, D.C. 20515

*Dear Fellow Vermonter,*

Knowing your interest in environmental and energy issues, I want to take this opportunity to inform you about developments in Congress on these issues and some of the work that my office is doing.

Nobody can deny that our current energy policy is a disaster for the environment and human health. The expanded burning of fossil fuel generates acid rain, global warming and air pollution – creating severe health hazards for the people of our planet.

Not only is the widespread use of fossil fuel wreaking havoc on our environment, it is also clear that our dependence on OPEC and Middle East oil is a barrier to the creation of strong and stable jobs. In the year 2001 it no longer makes sense that the vitality of our economy is directly tied to the amount of oil produced by the OPEC energy cartel. Further, since September 11th, many of us recognize the absurdity of providing tens of billions of dollars each year in oil revenue to non-democratic governments in the Mideast which use some of that money to fund terrorist organizations.

The time is now for a fundamental change in our national energy policy. Congress must have the courage to stand up to the wealthy and powerful special interests in the oil, coal and gas industries who are far more concerned about their profits than the well-being of the planet.

I am proud to tell you that, in order to move us in this direction, I have recently introduced the most sweeping energy reform legislation in Congress. This bill would greatly increase energy conservation and energy efficiency, and lead us toward a non-polluting, sustainable energy system. More information on this legislation is included in this newsletter.

As part of my office's efforts to raise consciousness on the need for new energy policies, I hosted a major energy conference in Burlington on October 29th. The conference, which attracted a 400-person standing-room-only crowd, featured two of America's premier energy leaders, Amory Lovins and David Freeman. As many of you know, Lovins is one of the foremost experts on energy efficiency and security. Freeman is currently the "energy czar" of California, having been recently appointed by that state's Governor to address the enormous electric power crisis that California has faced.

Finally, I am very proud that, at my request, the Energy and Water Appropriations bill recently signed into law provided \$1 million to the Washington Electric Cooperative for wind energy in central Vermont. I hope this funding will serve as a beacon for a new awareness of the potential that wind energy holds for Vermont. Wind power is the world's fastest growing energy source. Some experts believe that Vermont can produce 20-50 percent of its electricity from wind turbines.

If you have any questions about environmental issues, or any other concern, please do not hesitate to contact my Burlington office at **1 Church Street, 2nd Floor, Burlington, VT 05401, (800) 339-9834**, or my Washington office at **2135 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515, (202) 225-4115**. You can also contact me through e-mail at **bernie@mail.house.gov**. Also, please visit our website at **www.bernie.house.gov** which is updated almost daily to keep up on issues in Congress.

Sincerely yours,

Bernard Sanders, Member of Congress

# The Comprehensive Energy Conservation Act for the 21st Century

I introduced the Comprehensive Energy Conservation Act for the 21st Century (HR 3274) on November 9, 2001, with Congressmen Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and Bob Filner (D-CA). In my view, this legislation is the most comprehensive and sweeping energy reform bill currently in Congress. If passed, it will break our dependency on fossil fuels and Middle East oil, and move us boldly in the direction of energy sustainability. It will also be a boon to our economy, as it will create substantial investment in America's infrastructure and a significant number of new jobs.

Some highlights of this legislation:

- **Increase federal funding for the highly successful Weatherization Assistance Program.**

Weatherization is a very important program for Vermont and the nation. It makes no sense that millions of lower income people live in homes with inadequate insulation, roofs and windows – and waste huge amounts of money as heat literally “goes out the window.” Unfortunately, this successful program is terribly underfunded. Instead of building new power plants and drilling more oil wells, we should make certain the energy we produce is used well.

- **Provide tax credits for low to middle income consumers and small businesses who purchase energy efficient appliances and homes.**

The federal government currently has an excellent program called “Energy Star” that rates household appliances and office equipment. By expanding the Energy Star program through tax credits and rebates, we can make our homes

and businesses 30 to 50 percent more efficient, saving consumers \$11 billion every year in energy costs.

- **Substantially reduce our consumption of gasoline by raising the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for cars and light trucks.**

Since 1975, CAFE standards have reduced oil use by more than 3 million barrels per day, saving car owners more than \$3,000 in fuel costs and preventing more than 150 million tons of global warming pollution each year.

Unfortunately, for the past six years, despite vastly improved technology, Congress has frozen these standards. As a

result, the average new passenger vehicle gets worse mileage today than twenty years ago, while we consume a record-breaking amount of oil.

We must correct this absurd situation by raising the CAFE standards to 45 miles per gallon for cars and 34 miles per gallon for light trucks

over the next decade. This would annually save consumers \$80 billion at the pump, and avoid burning 1.3 billion gallons of oil, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions by over 750 million tons.

- **Provide a \$6000 tax credit to Americans who buy ultra-efficient cars made in the U.S.**

Today most cars get less than 30 miles per gallon. This tax credit would stimulate the market in ultra-efficient vehicles and significantly increase the number of cars on our roads that get 50 or more miles per gallon. It will also create new jobs in the auto industry.

- **Require 20 percent of the nation's electricity to be produced from renewable sources of energy by 2020.**

Vastly increasing our utilization of renewable energy is no longer just a visionary concept, but an attainable objective that we must pursue. When I was mayor of Burlington, the City implemented the nation's first wood chip electric plant to use renewable forest resources for energy production. Renewable, non-polluting wind power has, in recent years, been the fastest growing energy source in the United States and throughout the world – averaging 24 percent annual growth during the 1990s. Solar power has also been expanding. In San Francisco, a major bond issue was recently passed which will move that city dramatically forward in harnessing the power of the sun. Renewable energy is a practical, cost-effective approach which can and must be implemented as soon as possible to protect our environment, our economy and our national security.

- **Increase funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program to ensure that 22 million American households receive the help they need to stay warm.**

My legislation includes increased support for a lifeline program for seniors and low-income families called the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). For states like Vermont, LIHEAP is literally a life-saver for many senior citizens and others with limited incomes. Without it, some people would have to make the unacceptable choice between buying the food they need or heating their homes. In the richest country in the world, no one should go cold or be forced to make such choices.



# \$1 Million Federal Grant for Wind Energy in Vermont

I am very proud that, at my request, the Energy and Water Appropriations bill that was recently signed into law provided \$1 million to the Washington Electric Cooperative (WEC) for wind energy development.

This money will serve two key purposes: First, these funds will help WEC create central Vermont's first large-scale wind energy project. For WEC, this will provide for future load growth and replace power they will no longer receive from the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant.



Second, and perhaps more important, it will serve as a beacon for a new awareness of the potential that wind energy holds for Vermont. I hope that this project will become a galvanizing force in moving those efforts forward.

Many Americans are unaware that wind energy has come a long way from the research stage and from the kind of wind turbines that existed in the past. In fact, wind energy is now the fastest growing source of new power in the United States and in the world.

Estimates are that in the state of Vermont wind can provide between 20% and

50% of our electricity needs. Wind power can replace all of the 250 megawatts Vermont Yankee provides our state.

In case this seems surprising, consider these facts:

- **Wind is the world's fastest growing new power source**, having increased by about 24% each year since 1990.
- **In Denmark**, in an average year, 14.5% of their electricity comes from wind and they have set a goal of 50% by the year 2020. They produce 50% of the world's wind turbines and the industry employs approximately 16,000 Danes.
- **Germany**, as of this spring, has installed 6,400 MW of wind energy capacity (40% more than the entire U.S.!) which meets almost 3% percent of that country's total electricity needs.
- **In Texas**, wind is now the cheapest form of electricity, costing about 3 cents per kilowatt hour, well below the so-called traditional sources. There are major wind energy developments taking place in several other states, including Iowa and Minnesota.
- **Here in Vermont**, the Searsburg wind power site developed for Green Mountain Power produces 6 megawatts of electricity from 11 turbines. That's enough to power 2,000 homes (reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 22 million pounds per year). And, the site has the potential to expand to 30 megawatts.

Unfortunately, wind energy contributes less than 1% of the national supply of electricity in the United States, and all forms of renewable energy combined are only 1% at the present time. We can and must do better.



*Germany, with only one-twentieth the area of the continental US – about the size of the state of Montana – has already installed 40 percent more wind power.*

## New Plan for the Green Mountain National Forest

The U.S. Forest Service has begun work on rewriting the plan for the use of the federal forest in Vermont. This plan may have a major impact on our environment and economy. I think it is fair to say that neither the wood products industry nor environmentalists concerned with wildlife habitat are satisfied with the current situation. The way to a better plan is through a true Vermont-based collaboration.

The Forest Service is holding meetings and educational forums around the state. I encourage all interested Vermonters to get involved in helping develop the plan for this singular and critical resource.

For more information:  
call 802-747-6754  
email [mmreichert@fs.fed.us](mailto:mmreichert@fs.fed.us)  
visit [www.fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl/nepa\\_planning/plan\\_revision.htm](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl/nepa_planning/plan_revision.htm)



## In This Issue...

### *A Special Focus on Energy*

Letter from Bernie ..... Page 1

The Comprehensive Energy  
Conservation Act for the  
21st Century..... Page 2

\$1 Million Federal Grant for  
Wind Energy in Vermont ..... Page 3

New Green Mountain National  
Forest Plan ..... Page 3

Northeast Energy Conference  
in Burlington a Success ..... Page 4

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*If you receive more than one copy of this newsletter, we apologize. Please feel free to pass the extra copy along to an interested friend.*

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## Northeast Energy Conference in Burlington Advances Renewables

On October 29th, I hosted the “Northeast Energy Future Conference” at the Radisson Hotel in Burlington. The all-day conference, which attracted an overflow crowd of 400, featured two of the nations’ most prominent energy experts: Amory Lovins, author of 27 books, CEO of the Rocky Mountain Institute and one of the most recognized leaders in the world on renewable energy and energy efficiency; and David Freeman, Chair of the California Power Authority and former manager of several of the nation’s most progressive public utilities.

Twenty-five years ago Lovins shocked the world by showing that a “soft energy path” was a better solution to the energy crisis. Efficient use of energy, he demonstrated, was a better investment than a frantic search for oil and gas, or squeezing oil from shale. Today it is clear that he was right and the energy establishment was wrong. Energy demand is far below what was predicted by policy makers and producers in the mid-seventies.

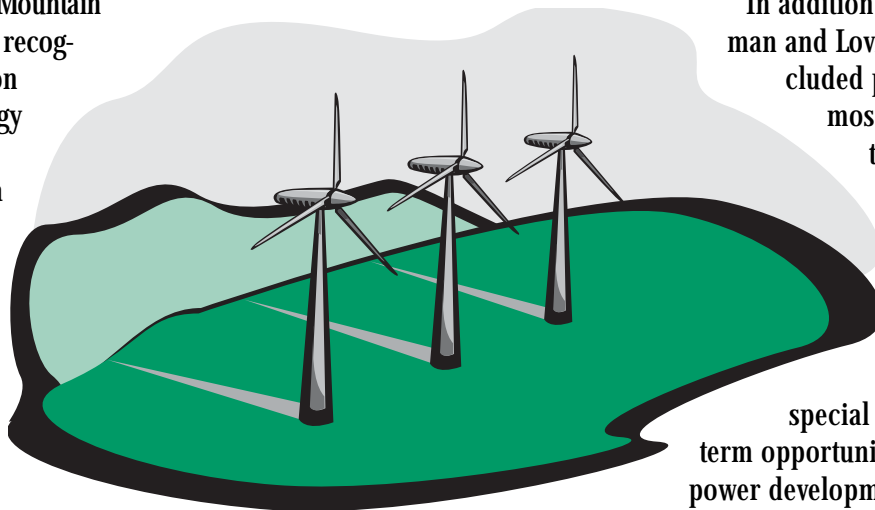
At the conference, Lovins and Freeman both stated that major gains in energy efficiency are well within reach. Lovins, in fact, discussed an automobile that his hypercar firm designed which could get 99 mpg using hydrogen fuel cells. He also recounted how efficiency

summer, said a \$50 million advertising campaign calling for conservation was a key ingredient to success, as was a “20-20 program” in which consumers got an additional 20 percent discount on their electric bill if they cut demand by 20 percent.

In addition to the remarks by Freeman and Lovins, the conference included panel discussions on the most effective role of industry, government, and energy organizations in shaping the future of energy policy in the Northeast and beyond. The conference also featured a

special focus panel on the near-term opportunity for commercial wind power development in the region.

This was the first time in recent memory that such a diverse and influential group of professionals gathered to discuss the topic of energy in such concrete terms. I am hopeful that we can build on the success of this conference to increase energy efficiency and renewable energy sources in Vermont and the Northeast.



efforts prompted by the oil price shocks of the 1970s “cut U.S. oil use 15 percent and imports from the Middle East 87 percent in just six years (1979-1985). During the same period, the nation’s economy, grew by 16 percent,” he said.

Freeman, who was instrumental in helping California avoid blackouts this